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Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1360

Letter No. 2695

January 6, 1995

USDA ALLOWS SOYBEAN PLANTING ON FLEX ACRES — Soybeans may be planted on optional flexible acreage in 1995. Grant Buntrock, Executive Vice President of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, said, "Under current statutory provisions, soybeans may not be planted on optional flexible acreage if, on January 1, the estimated price for the 1995 crop is less than 105 percent of the 1995 loan rate, which was announced on November 15 as \$4.92 per bushel." 1995 soybean prices are expected to be well above that level. Producers who choose to plant soybeans on optional flexible acres may receive price support, but deficiency payments cannot be made if crops are planted on acres that aren't established as the crop acreage base on that land. Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.

PROMOTING U.S. FLORALS — USDA has established a national research and promotion order covering fresh floral items effective December 29, 1994. Authorized by the Fresh Cut Flowers and Fresh Cut Greens Promotion and Information Act of 1993, the order follows the Department's review of comments received on three proposals. The order will maintain, develop and expand markets for fresh cut flowers and fresh cut greens and the program will be financed by assessments on handlers whose domestic sales are at least \$750,000 annually. A referendum will be held within three years to determine if the industry supports continuation of the program. Contact: Clarence Steinberg (202) 720-8998.

STATE PARTICIPATION IN MARKET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM — USDA is inviting state departments of agriculture and other state agencies to submit proposals under the Federal-State Market Improvement Program (FSMIP). FSMIP grants address a spectrum of marketing objectives. Most are studies to: identify new crops, markets and marketing systems for agricultural products, both domestically and internationally; improve marketing efficiency to enhance competitiveness and profitability; maintain product quality through new handling, processing and distribution techniques; and provide marketing assistance to the specialty foods industries. Awardees must match the government's contribution. If your organization is affiliated with a state department of agriculture, you would apply through that department. Deadlines for proposals are February 1 and June 1, 1995. Contact: Clarence Steinberg (202) 720-8998.

COMPLIANCE FIGURES FOR '94 ARP — A total of 83.1 percent of farms were in compliance with 1994 commodity production adjustment program requirements. USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation announced (December 30) that 83.1 percent of the crop acreage bases established for wheat, feed grains, upland and extra-long staple (ELS) cotton, and rice were on farms of producers who were in compliance with commodity program requirements. Under the commodity program agreements, 1.5 million acres were designated as Acreage Conservation Reserve, all in the upland and ELS cotton programs. Also, 11.3 million acres were idled under the 0,50/85-92 provisions; 1.6 million acres were planted to minor oilseeds under the 0/85-92 provisions (wheat and feed grain program participants only); and 21,698 acres of industrial and other crops were planted under the 0,50/85-92 provisions. Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.

SUGAR MARKETING ALLOTMENTS REVISED -- The second quarter revision of sugar marketing allotments and allocations for fiscal year 1995 have been announced (December 30). In accordance with provisions of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, as amended, the Secretary of Agriculture has re-estimated U.S. sugar consumption, stocks, production, and imports, and determined that sugar marketing allotments should continue for fiscal year 1995. Based on the current supply-demand-price situation, reasonable ending stocks are estimated to total 1,172 thousand short tons, down 106,000 tons from the September estimate. This results in the overall allotment quantity continuing unchanged at 7,889. Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.

GLOBAL IMPORT QUOTA -- A limited global import quota will allow additional U.S. imports of upland cotton, up to 426,887,727 pounds. This additional quantity is not subject to the over-quota tariff rate. The quota will be in effect for 90 days, from January 6 through April 6, 1995. In order to be counted against this quota, cotton must be imported within this time period. A limited global import quota was in effect earlier this year from June 3 through August 31. Since the 21-day supply is smaller than the quantity needed to increase supply to 130 percent of demand, the quota is equal to 21 days of domestic mill consumption of upland cotton at the seasonally-adjusted average rate for the period September through November 1994. Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.

PEANUT EXPORT PRICE SET -- USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) proposed (January 3) a minimum sales price of \$400 per short ton for the 1995 crop of peanuts for export edible use. The CCC sales price is unchanged from the 1994 level. Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.

USDA SETS TOBACCO ASSESSMENTS -- USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation announced (December 30) the combined flue-cured tobacco no-net-cost and marketing assessments will be 0.8 of a cent for producers and 1.8 cents for purchasers for each pound of 1995-crop flue-cured tobacco that is marketed. The Agricultural Act of 1949 was amended in 1986 to require no-net-cost assessments be determined so that producers and purchasers share equally in maintaining the no-net-cost account for 1985 and subsequent crops of flue-cured tobacco. In addition to the no-net-cost assessment, producers and purchasers are required to pay a tobacco marketing assessment. The marketing assessment amounted to 0.7985 cent per pound for both producers and purchasers. Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.

NO EXTENSION FOR UPLAND COTTON LOANS -- Loan extensions will not be available on outstanding Commodity Credit Corporation nonrecourse upland cotton loans that have a maturity date of January 31, 1995. The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that upland cotton loans mature 10 months from the first day of the month in which the loans are made. Producers may request an 8-month extension upon maturity of the loan. However, loan extensions are prohibited whenever the average price for upland cotton (base quality) in designated spot markets for the preceding month exceeds 130 percent of the average spot price for base quality for the preceding 36 months. The December 1994 average spot market price for base quality was 81.92 cents per pound, which is 136 percent of the December 1991 through November 1994 average. Therefore, no extensions will be granted. Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1962 -- On this edition of Agriculture USA, Lori Spiczka takes a look at the Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community program. (Weekly cassette -- 13-1/2 minute documentary).

CONSUMER TIME # 1443 -- Pesticide safety at home; expanded weather warning system; sheep produce more than wool and meat; feeding children in a day care setting; are your holiday snapshots fading away? (Weekly cassette -- 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features).

AGRITAPE FEATURES # 1953 -- Export outlook a good one; North Dakota, an urban state?; GAO criticizes GSM program; Farm Bill buzzwords; an alternate look at tobacco's importance; planting soybeans on flex acres: an explanation. (Weekly cassette -- news features).

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- ****Note to broadcasters**** USDA's Economic Research Service, (those who bring you the Outlook and Situation reports), are changing the way they release their reports. Most of the crop outlooks will all be issued on one day of the month, and all at 4:00 p.m. Eastern time rather than at 3:00 p.m. Some of the coverage of these reports will be delayed until the next day. This system will make it very difficult to predict in this newsletter what reports we will air on what day. The following is our best guess. Wednesday, January 11, cotton crop production. Thursday, January 12, we will change the line twice. At 10:30 a.m., world ag supply and demand, grain and rice stocks, winter wheat plantings. At 5:00 p.m. we will add coverage of the cotton and wool outlook. Friday, January 13, world grain ag production update, oil crops outlook, feed outlook, rice outlook. (We will try to get all these on for you on Friday's line to get you through the holiday weekend.) Tuesday, January 17, crop/weather update, hog outlook, milk production. Wednesday, January 18, vegetable production. Thursday, Jan 19, non-citrus fruit, nut production summary. These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURE -- Lynn Wyvill reports on USDA's Forest Service projects to make National Forest recreation more accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA meteorologist Bob Stefanski on the latest weather and crop conditions.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on USDA's experimental "Dairy Barn of the Future" in Beltsville, MD. (5-part series).

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:

*Galaxy 7, Transponder 9, Channel 9, Audio 6.2 or 6.8, Downlink frequency 3880 Mhz.
Available on Thursdays 3:45 - 4:00 p.m., EDT; Mondays 11:00 - 11:15 a.m., EDT.*

OFF MIKE

POTATO SCHOOL...for Idaho producers is scheduled January 25-26 in Pocatello, reports **Bob Burtenshaw** (KUPI, Idaho Falls, ID). This is the 27th annual event that features experts on all aspects of potato production. Potato crop was excellent this year, and with more snow depth than normal, farmers are encouraged that the drought situation is improving. Bob is on-the-air for couple of hours in the mornings and also reports agricultural stories on KIFI-TV. In Idaho, skiers love snow and farmers do, too, because snow melt is a major source of irrigation water.

MORE THAN 50 YEARS...in radio broadcasting, and **Warren Nielson** (KMTV, Omaha, NE) has never been out of a job. He's in his 33rd year at KMTV! Warren began his radio career in March, 1943.

CAREER CHOICES...conference for young teens (12-14 years) is scheduled February 17-18 in Quincy, IL. **Vicki Ellers** (WTAD, Quincy, IL) is among the scheduled speakers who will give 4-H youth a look into the future. Her topic: "It's Not All Cows, Plows, Hicks and Chicks." Vicki gained communications skills while a 4-H'er, was a farm radio intern, and became a farm broadcaster after graduation two years ago from University of Illinois.

A LONGTIME FRIEND...to many broadcasters and others calling USDA's Office of the Secretary retired December 31. **Betty Stern** will be honored in a retirement celebration January 18 from 2-4 p.m. on USDA's Patio. **John Ochs**, press secretary to former **Secretary John Block**, will be master of ceremonies. Guests dating back to the administration of **Secretary Orville Freeman** are expected to join in celebrating Betty's long years of service to the Secretary's office at USDA.

TV FEATURE...inquiry came this week from **Michelle Ryan** (KTKA-TV, Topeka, KS) who had seen listings in this letter. They have an hour-long "Good Morning" program for viewers in northeast Kansas and have used USDA features in that program.

Larry A. Quinn

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Broadcasters Letter

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